

So long as my own field observations on *Botrychium* were confined to central New York and New England, I regarded all the forms that there appear as running into each other and so discarded the "varieties" as trivial. I had never, indeed, until last season seen in the field the genuine form that Sprengel long ago described as *Botrychium dissectum*, a type that sixteen years of collecting in New England, and a large array of material from all parts of that territory, has not revealed as a New England form. Mr. Davenport's statement that it is a common New England form only reveals the fact that he is confusing with it a very different plant which is common in New England and elsewhere, but has little in common with the genuine *dissectum*. Had I experienced the misfortune to have my field work confined to eastern Massachusetts I might even yet be holding Mr. Davenport's ultra conservative notions. As it is, I believe now that while the evidence is not all in, the present indications are that Prantl's arrangement of the American species is far more logical than any other arrangement that has yet appeared, and that we have in America in the *ternatum* group a series of species even more distinct when rightly understood than the species of that other closely allied group that Baker so unceremoniously and illogically places under the aggregate "*Botrychium rutaceum* Swz."<sup>5</sup> I am anticipating the pleasure of soon going over the evidence at Kew and the types at Paris, and shall hope that a still wider range of data will help us to arrive at a better understanding of the genus.

It is unnecessary to discuss further Mr. Davenport's position, for his mind was fully made up in advance, since he wrote me some time ago that "Milde had said the last word on *Botrychium*, as though any problem of taxonomy could be settled by an appeal to "authority," and before the evidence was all in.—LUCIEN M. UNDERWOOD, *Columbia University*.

#### COLOR IN PLANTS.

*To the Editors of the Botanical Gazette*:—In your issue of January 1897 there is a notice of Professor Wittrock's studies on the history and origin of the garden pansy, at the conclusion of which is the following pregnant sentence, viz.: "If the pollinating insects prove to be color-blind, as is claimed now by certain physiologists, the yellow eye, as well as all floral coloration, will need a new explanation."

I venture to point out that such a new explanation is suggested in an article entitled "Organic color," which appeared in *Science*, June 16, 1893, published in New York. If any scientist who feels interested in the subject would consider and criticise that paper a useful discussion might ensue.—F. T. MOTT, *Crescent House, Leicester, England*.

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that recent European monographers follow Prantl in separating the European species (*B. rutifolium*) from the *ternatum* muddle in which Milde left it. Cf., e. g., Luerssen in Rabenh. Krypt. Flora 3: 582-588.